Connecting Teaching to an Overall Approach to Life

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Abstract

In previous writing, we explored the links between teachers' professional and personal life. In this article, we take the discussion a step further by providing a systematic account of the overall approach to life that underlies our vision of teaching. Among the key elements in the approach to life we are proposing are an emphasis on happiness, enjoyment, etc.; a complex, holistic, prioritized, and integrated way of life; gradual rather than sudden improvement over time; relationships with and caring for other people; the importance of self-interest and self-esteem; and a balance of optimism and realism. For each element, we discuss briefly its implications for teaching. This account is offered not as "the answer" to questions about how to live and teach, but rather as a basis for ongoing dialogue on these matters: we welcome feedback and expect to adjust our position significantly over time.

要旨：　前著では教師の職業生活と個人生活のつながりを探求した。本稿ではさらに議論を深め、教育ビジョンの根底にある生き方に対して総合的アプローチからの体系的説明を提示する。このアプローチでは、幸福・喜びなどの重視と、複合性・総合性・優先性・統合性のある生き方、急激でない緩やかな成長、他者への関係と配慮、利己心と自尊心、楽観主義と現実主義のバランスを主要項目とする。本稿ではそれぞれの項目と教育との関わりについて簡潔に論じていく。本稿は教師生活をいかに送るかという問いへの“答え”を示すものではなく、教師生活への継続的議論の基盤を提示するものである。本論考へのご意見を歓迎し、有意な調整が今後実施されることを期待している。

In this article, we present more systematically than we have before the overall approach to life that underlies our theory and practice of teaching and teacher education. We want in this way to illustrate why inquiry into teaching and teacher education is inseparable from inquiry into values and "the good life." It is normally impossible to teach well unless we have a good sense of how to live well; and hence in teacher education we need to spend a great deal of time discussing life issues if we are to prepare new teachers adequately for their role.

It might be objected that such an approach requires too much of teachers and teacher educators: how can they, without extensive background in moral philosophy, facilitate learning about human values and well-being? Our response is that they have no choice but to go in this direction. Teachers have always and inevitably had a major impact on their students' values and way of life through what they say and how they behave in the classroom. And increasingly today, a strong teacher role in this area is being mandated: teachers are told to facilitate social and emotional learning, understanding of "big ideas," mental health development, mindfulness practices, multicultural education, and so forth. Moreover, we believe teachers and teacher educators are already in a position to fulfill this role quite well. Even if they have not studied philosophy formally, they have much to contribute by virtue of having grappled with life issues since early childhood. They should be seen as "reflective practitioners" in life matters (Schon, 1983), with established insights and inquiry skills to build on. In exploring life issues with teachers and student teachers, then, teacher educators and in-service providers do not have to start from scratch and "tell" them what to value and how to live; rather they should engage in dialogue with them about these matters, a dialogue that will deeply enrich all those involved.

In this spirit, we (the authors) do not present this overall approach to life as "the answer," to be inculcated in teacher educators, teachers, and ultimately school students. Rather, we offer it as a basis for dialogue, a starting point for a conversation from which we will learn as much as anyone else. By proposing open dialogue we are not taking a relativist position, according to which values are just a matter of opinion and any way of life is as good as another. We definitely believe that some values and ways of life are better than others, because of objective features of reality, life, and individual contexts. However, imposition of a set of values and way of life is inappropriate because everyone

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has something to contribute, based on their extensive experience of life and their distinctive needs and life situation.

In this paper we outline twelve elements of a good way of life, in each case concluding with a brief application to teaching. Of course, given the extent and complexity of life, there are many other elements we could have discussed; but in the limited space available, we just present ones we regard as perhaps the most important. We look forward to feedback on these particular elements and the general approach we are recommending.

1. Emphasis on Happiness (Enjoyment, Satisfaction, etc.)

In *life*. We believe a key early step in developing a satisfactory way of life is to see the need for positive experiences, called by various names such as happiness, enjoyment, satisfaction, pleasure, contentment. This is in line with "positive psychology," notably the work of Martin Seligman (2002) who states that for much of the 20th century psychologists were "consumed with a single topic only - mental illness"; and while much valuable work was done, the time has come to focus also on more positive human qualities and how to achieve "the good life" (p. ix). Theorists in many fields claim that experiencing happiness, enjoyment, etc. is a large part (if not the whole) of what makes life worthwhile. This position is not "hedonistic" in the usual sense: it includes an emphasis on the refined and "worthy" satisfactions of helping others, serving society, producing useful knowledge, and so forth (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Dolan, 2014, Seligman, 2002). But it means these activities must normally bring us at least some pleasure or satisfaction, at some stage, if we are to have sufficient reason to consistently engage in them.

Recognizing that happiness, pleasure, etc. are important and legitimate is crucial because it means we can admit we have such desires, instead of feeling guilty about them and trying to suppress them, often with negative psychological consequences. It also means we can set about systematically seeking happiness rather than leaving it to chance. Some people argue it is better to leave it to chance, that happiness is more likely to come as a "by-product" of pursuing other goals. Even Csikszentmihalyi (1990), whose position we largely accept, says "we cannot reach happiness by consciously searching for it. 'Ask yourself whether you are happy,' said J. S. Mill, 'and you cease to be so'.... It is by being fully involved with every detail of our lives, whether good or bad, that we find happiness, not by trying to look for it directly" (p. 2). But although looking for happiness directly does sometimes bring stresses (e.g., if we spend *too* much time thinking about it, or if we overestimate how happy we can be and so are disappointed), on balance we will be more likely to achieve happiness if we take conscious steps in that direction - as with most things in life. We agree with Burnett & Evans (2016) and Dolan (2014) who say it is best if we deliberately "design" a happy life.

Happiness, however, is a very complex phenomenon and achieving it on a regular basis takes a lot of work. A total way of life has to be developed that includes many enjoyments and pleasures along with many less enjoyable activities necessary for sustaining the way of life. Seeing "meaning" in these less enjoyable activities, because of the overall gains they bring, can itself result in satisfaction, but the times of discomfort should not be denied. Another reality is that our happiness has to be balanced by the happiness of others. Once again, helping others and seeing them experience happiness can itself be a major source of satisfaction, but the limits it sometimes imposes on meeting our own needs has to be acknowledged (as every parent or teacher knows).

This more complex and realistic view of "the happy life" may at first be sobering and even lead us to wonder whether happiness is possible. But in our view this reaction is because of the exaggerated claims often made about how supremely happy we will be if we adopt a "positive outlook" or some other specific life approach (Oettingen, 2014). If however we give up such extreme views, it is within most people's reach to be "quite happy" or "happy enough," provided certain basic necessities of life are in place. This is in line with Seligman's (2002) view that, while research suggests that each of us has a "fixed range for happiness," it is possible "to live in the upper reaches" of that range (p. x).

Given this more realistic approach to happiness (which we will develop further in Section 9, below), "happy" is perhaps too strong a word and promises too much. But it is a very familiar word and is used a lot in everyday speech and academic writing. People seem to find it helpful and meaningful. We just need to recognize that, like most words, "happy" has a range of possible meanings. When we say "I'm happy" we may mean somewhat happy, fairly happy, or very happy, and we can convey which it is by the emphasis we place on the word or by an explicit qualification. There is no perfect word for the phenomenon we are discussing here, but we believe the words "happy" and "happiness" can

serve well if we clarify what we mean.

In teaching. Applying this life perspective to teaching, teachers should work to promote their own happiness so they can survive and thrive in the profession, remain there for their students, and understand enough about the pursuit of happiness to help their students in this area. They should try to maintain a work-life balance, in part for their own well-being but also so they can model for their students a well-rounded life. If they are hard on themselves they are likely to be hard on their students, lose their enthusiasm for their work, and alienate their students. Furthermore, they should strive to improve their practice of the profession so they are not only more effective but derive more satisfaction from it. This involves resisting to a considerable degree the current call to employ a traditional "transmission" pedagogy, which makes teaching both less effective and less enjoyable.

In the classroom setting, teachers should foster in their students a sense of the importance and legitimacy of happiness as a fundamental life value, and help them develop effective ways to pursue it. There should be frequent discussion with the students of what they enjoy in their everyday life and how that enjoyment can be increased. As Tanya, a teacher in our longitudinal study, said in her tenth year of teaching:

> One of my general life values is seeing the positive side of things, choosing to be happy; and I try to present that in the classroom. We celebrate the little things, we get enjoyment from going outside for daily physical activity, learning about new topics, reading books. I try to model the sense of happiness and enjoyment that can come from your daily experiences.

Covering the required curriculum should be made as enjoyable as possible, both through the atmosphere that pervades the teaching process and the classroom generally, and by spending more time on more meaningful, relevant, and interesting topics.

One great advantage of an emphasis on happiness in the classroom is that it can help overcome negative comparisons of students and damaging feelings of inferiority. The traditional classroom has focused on a narrow band of talents related to mastering traditional academic content, abilities that in fact are strongly affected by students' socioeconomic status. In addition, the student culture has tended to emphasize possessions, modes of dress, success in sports, participation in popular cultural events, etc., an emphasis that again typically favors those from privileged backgrounds. By contrast, a focus on happiness as a central life achievement opens up possibilities for all students to be seen as talented and successful.

2. A Complex, Holistic Approach to Life

In life. People need a comprehensive "way of life" in order to achieve happiness and well-being, one that includes intellectual, social, emotional, physical, civic, occupational, and other dimensions. Many conditions need to be fulfilled if we are to experience even a moderate degree of happiness, and if we are to have the multiplicity of motives needed to behave in ways required to sustain a happy life: will-power alone is not enough (Dolan, 2014).

Too often just one or two principles of living are stressed when talking about well-being: e.g., thinking positively, financial success, having friends, meditating. But Oettingen (2014), as noted earlier, observes that we need to think about the negatives as well as the positives in order to achieve our wishes, and this in turn requires a great deal of knowledge of the realities of life. Similarly, economist and psychologist Paul Dolan, whose 2014 book "Happiness by Design" is sub-titled "Change What You Do, Not How You Think," emphasizes that a complex set of life activities is needed in order to be happy; this is why he describes his approach as "context-focused, rather than cognition-driven" (p. 153). Although cognition is important, having positive thoughts, meditating, "looking on the bright side," and the like are not sufficient if we do not have a way of life within which happiness is possible.

One common way of talking about the need for a complex life is in terms of "holistic" living (Miller, 1988, 2010), from the Greek *holos* meaning whole or entire (Oxford English Dictionary). A holistic approach takes account of the whole person (mind, body, emotions, etc.) and the whole environment (social, cultural, physical, etc.) in which people live. While "the whole person" includes the "soul" or "spirit" in some sense of these terms, this need not imply (though does not exclude) a supernatural dimension: the great complexity of life does not necessarily make it "ineffable" or in principle beyond ordinary inquiry. Sometimes a holistic approach is seen as involving "going within" to a mysterious source of insight, but again this is not necessary to what we are advocating. Our emphasis is on the complexity and

connectedness of life, both inner and outer, and the necessity of taking account of the whole - to the extent possible - as we design our life.

In teaching. In line with this general insight about life, teachers should themselves live holistically, developing many aspects of their personality. They will experience greater well-being if they do and be better teachers. If they spend too much time studying the curriculum, preparing for classes, and marking papers they will have less wisdom and insight to share with their students. A solid work-life balance not only sets a good example for students but provides teachers with a wider range of experience. Instead of this being an abrogation of responsibility, teachers should see that they "owe it to their students" to live a rich life.

In the classroom, all aspects of life need to be emphasized in the teaching program, not just the narrowly academic. This is difficult given current pressures to "cover the curriculum" and prepare students for subject-based standardized tests; but we believe that with practice it is possible to learn to do both: teach a great deal of subject content and address "real-world" and way of life matters. The only proviso is the subject content should on the whole be more relevant than in past schooling, and the more relevant aspects of the curriculum should be taught in greater depth.

3. Having Priorities

In life. It is not enough to see the importance of happiness, enjoyment, etc. and therefore of a complex, holistic life. We need to *live* such a life; and this requires giving priority to certain things over others. As discussed before, what brings people happiness - and hence what we should prioritize - is partly an individual matter. For example, while socializing is very important to many people, they vary in whether they wish to interact mainly with a small group of family and friends or a wider circle of friends and acquaintances.

A key reason for identifying priorities is because, with only so much time for various activities and experiences, we need to give priority to what is more important and satisfying so that if we run out of time at least our main needs have been covered. Stress that undermines happiness often arises from taking on too much and then becoming anxious that we will not have time to take care of the crucial matters; or, in order to do everything we have committed to, we have to rush through activities we could potentially enjoy and so lose much of their enjoyment.

Whatever priorities we identify, a lot of initiative is required to implement them; and such deciding and implementing is a life-long task, with many modifications along the way (Barnett & Evans, 2016). Taking charge of our life in this way is challenging: as Csikszentmihalyi (1990) says, "Getting control of life is never easy, and sometimes it can be definitely painful" (p. 4). Apart from mistakes in judgment and fluctuations in motivation, we often have other people telling us what our emphases should be and trying to force us to go in other directions. Again, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) notes that we must to some extent "become independent of the social environment [and] find enjoyment and purpose regardless of external circumstances" (p. 16); although of course we should not cut ourselves off from others too much, otherwise other priorities will be undermined. All this requires constant rethinking, negotiation, and adjustment. But provided we do not spend too much time on such reflection, the pay-off in terms of well-being will make it worthwhile.

We have focused to this point on priorities of the individual because in the past *individual* well-being and life planning have been neglected, with serious consequences for both individuals and society. However, most people also live in partnerships or shared arrangements of varying kinds, and these are typically very important for their well-being, offering companionship, support, opportunities for learning, and many other benefits. Maintaining fruitful relationships usually requires many adjustments to our priorities to fit the needs of the other(s) involved. However, we still have to pay attention to our individual priorities in order to promote our own well-being and happiness; even from a benevolent point of view, if we are unhappy we will not be in a good position to support the well-being of those with whom we have relationships.

In teaching. Teachers need to identify professional priorities to ensure they are being optimally effective professionally and experiencing enjoyment and fulfilment in their role. Different teachers have different knowledge and talents, and to a significant degree they should modify their professional activities accordingly. If they teach to their strengths both they and their students will often be better off. Up to a point, students can learn different things and gain different enthusiasms from different teachers. If all teachers try to teach exactly the same content and skills, and in the same way, much valuable teacher input and talent will be lost.

Turning more directly to priorities for students, teachers should ensure that students are learning what they most need, both collectively and individually. In traditional education, the purpose of the subject content studied was often not considered, let alone its distinctive relevance for particular students. As Goodlad said long ago (1966), the main focus was the "structure of the disciplines" rather than their relevance to students' lives. To the extent permitted teachers should prioritize what they teach, spending more time on relevant content. Apart from making subject teaching relevant, in the general life of the classroom teachers should find ways to attend to pressing aspects of life that will be of importance to students beyond the classroom and in later years.

4. Integration

In life. Like prioritization, as just discussed, integration is another way to optimize well-being with the limited time and resources available; it does so by enabling us to achieve several ends at once. For example, we can have friends we enjoy but who also teach us things; read books that are entertaining and also educational; play computer games that teach us transferrable digital skills; engage in fitness activities that are opportunities for socializing. As we build our way of life, we need to look for activities that are combined and integrated in this way.

Apart from increasing the range and extent of enjoyable experiences in our life, integrating activities can help motivate us to do what is needed to sustain our way of life. Traditional morality in many parts of the world emphasized "will-power," that is, the ability to do the right thing despite challenging circumstances; and people who had such power were seen as truly good. However, most normal people often fail such tests of pure will-power; and surely people are just as "good" if they work to set up life contexts that are inherently motivating and so enable them to do the right thing. According to Dolan (2014), we humans are "creatures of our environments" and need to build "contexts" in which we are able to act appropriately (p. 144). Integrating multiple motivating factors in the same environment is a key way of "nudging" ourselves (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008) into doing what is necessary.

While emphasizing integration, however, we wish to note that *sometimes* we have to deliberately separate or compartmentalize aspects of our life. For example, if we are experiencing major stress in one aspect of life, we need to find ways to largely set it aside for a time and focus on and celebrate more positive aspects. We also need to avoid allowing the stress of the problem area to spoil our relationships with people who are not necessarily connected to it: the common phenomenon of "taking it out" on other people. While this involves separation rather than integration, however, it still requires having a broad, holistic view of our life so we can decide which things go together and in what ways. Also in a sense there is integration because we are using the positives of life to help relieve the suffering in a particular area.

In teaching. Teachers need to integrate subjects and topics around themes and "big ideas" that students find meaningful. As in life generally, integration increases student motivation as they can often find several points of interest in a given topic. Traditionally, academic topics have been studied largely in isolation from each other and from the "real world." Integration of topics can greatly increase depth of understanding and also the extent to which students remember and apply what they learn in later life.

As with life in general, too, integration of learning can enable us to teach many things at once and so cover both more academic content and more real-world topics in the limited time available. There are dangers here because an especially important idea or skill may be overlooked in the process. However, with time teachers learn how to check for coverage of essential content while also addressing a wide range of other important issues.

5. Routines, Recurring Activities, "Flow"

In life. So far in this paper we have talked about the need for a comprehensive, holistic, integrated way of life within which priority is given to elements that optimize happiness, enjoyment, etc. But how much continuity versus change should there be in this way of life? When we are "on a good thing," should we "stick to it"; or should we be continually trying to "transform" our lives? In our view, while it is important to go in new directions the change should normally be gradual, taking place against a background of considerable continuity. After all, we have been intelligently making choices and designing our lives up to this point: there is bound to be a lot of good in it that we should hold onto. This is in line with the ideas of Heath (2015) and Kennedy (2010), who say there is a limit to how much we can realistically change at a given point in time without doing more harm than good.

While generally supporting this "gradualist" point of view, however, we wish to note that it is far from a conservative position. Rather it is a view of what is the quickest way to bring about the improvement that is needed in individual lives and the world generally. Despite the incredible progress in the world today in many areas, there is still not enough well-being, even among quite affluent people. As Csikszentmihalyi (1990) says:

> We do not understand what happiness is any better than Aristotle did, and as for learning how to attain that blessed condition, one could argue that we have made no progress at all. Despite the fact that we are now healthier and grow to be older, despite the fact that even the least affluent among us [in prosperous countries] are surrounded by material luxuries undreamed of even a few decades ago...people often end up feeling that their lives have been wasted, that instead of being filled with happiness their years were spent in anxiety and boredom. (p. 1)

Adopting a gradualist approach to change means that our lives will contain many routines, recurring activities, and ongoing arrangements - in family life, friendships, work, study, entertainment, foods, etc. - that we modify continually but seldom change all at once. Having such continuing elements is important for several reasons. It gives us many proven satisfactions, reducing anxiety as we experiment with new directions. It provides a solid basis for change, enabling us to refine what already exists, see the results, and then adjust accordingly: it allows improvement to be cumulative. And it means that at any given time we do not have to engage in *too* much reflection, thus undermining enjoyment of what we are currently doing.

Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) often cited concept of "flow" is relevant here - although we believe it must be qualified in certain ways. On his view, much of the secret of happiness lies in being totally absorbed in what we are doing: flow is "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; [and] the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" (p. 4). To a large extent we agree with this approach. To have our life "flow along" naturally and enjoyably, without excessive attention to purposes and consequences, can enhance happiness; and to achieve such flow is largely why we need recurring activities, routines, habits, etc., as discussed above. We will not be happy if we are constantly second-guessing ourselves, wondering whether we should be doing something else, and thinking about a great other many aspects of life. We should largely commit ourselves, for a time at least, to many activities and experiences that in the past have reliably delivered enjoyment and satisfaction.

However, at least two qualifications are needed. First, *total* absorption in what we are doing is normally not a good idea: we must at least be open to alternatives and to on-the-spot modifications. A significant amount of "reflection-in-action" (Schon, 1983) and related adjustment is compatible with enjoying what we are doing, and moreover is important for fine-tuning our activities. This is partly what Oettingen means when she talks about the limits of positive thinking and the need for constant "mental contrasting"; and her extensive research has shown that ongoing consideration of alternative goals and courses of action can be combined with achievement of our wishes.

The second qualification of the flow approach is that there are usually many elements that make a life happy: we normally cannot find happiness *just* by focusing on one thing, e.g., finding a cure for cancer (one of Csikszentmihalyi's examples). As argued earlier, there are typically many goals and needs we should attend to at the same time, and indeed *will* attend to no matter how hard we try to ignore them. This again is what Dolan (2014) is getting at when he says we are creatures of our environment: total mental absorption in one thing (just like focusing on positives alone, rather than mental contrasting) is not a solution to the problem of happiness; many other elements and thoughts must be in place in a total context in order to be happy.

In teaching. Teachers should feel they have the right to have certain habits, routines, etc. Sometimes it is suggested that teachers should be amazingly creative and constantly devising radically new ways to teach, rather than returning year after the year to much the same set of topics, readings, and issues. However, while constant refinement is important, as discussed previously, along with adjustment to the distinctive needs and interests of students, the continuity crucial in everyday life is also appropriate in the work of a teacher. Having routines and recurring activities reduces the workload, gives a sense of security and predictability, and provides a solid basis the fine-tuning. If we try to change everything at once rather than making adjustments to what has worked moderately well before, things can go very wrong.

Turning to the student experience, regular routines and recurring activities can give a sense of familiarity and security. Rather than constantly asking "what am I supposed to be doing," students can focus on the issues and content at hand (in line with Csikszentmihalyi's notion of absorption in the present). Moreover, they can learn valuable study practices and what Meier et al. (2015) call "habits of mind" (e.g., looking up information, questioning, comparing notes with peers, discussing, reaching conclusions) that they can carry with them throughout their schooling and for the rest of their lives.

Smith and Wilhelm (2002), who use "flow" as the basic lens for approaching literacy learning among male working class high school students, say that flow in a pure form puts too much emphasis on competence as the source of enjoyment, and as a result "keeps many of the young men from developing new interests and abilities" in areas where they are not as competent (p. 31). They also note that flow theory - with its stress on individual engagement - does not account sufficiently for "how important socializing [is] to the young men" (p. 42). None of this, however, detracts from the value of establishing regular patterns of enjoyable, meaningful activity as *one* key strategy in classroom learning and life generally.

6. Relationships With and Caring For Other People

In life. To this point we have talked mainly about designing our *own* complex, integrated way of life that is enjoyable and satisfying. However, as noted earlier, a happy life also typically involves relating to *other people* and working for *their* well-being. There are several reasons for this: interacting with other people is a major source of enjoyment in itself; we need the support of others; we can learn a lot from others; most people care about others and want to help them; and helping others can also bring enjoyment and satisfaction. Designing our life, then, involves much thought and action to establish and maintain good relationships and community connections. Some may say we should not think too much about building relationships, they should "just happen"; but given their complexity and importance, and the limits of time and resources, developing relationships needs a great deal of attention.

In addition to enjoyment, a major advantage of relationships (as just mentioned) lies in how much we learn from them. As our relationships deepen we learn steadily more about ourselves, those we relate to, and people in general; and as we converse with people, we learn many things they already know about the real world. With the emphasis today on "expert" knowledge, there is a tendency to underestimate what we can learn from ordinary people and to focus simply on the support and enjoyment aspects of relationships. However, with their varied backgrounds and experiences, our friends and acquaintances are an extremely valuable source of insight (in just the way that ordinary classroom teachers learn a lot about teaching through their everyday work with students).

Apart from enjoyment and learning, relationships are also a key context for helping other people. Although enhancing one's own happiness needs much more emphasis than at present, caring for others is also crucial. A key motivation here is empathy, a widespread human emotion (Dolby, 2012; Lowenstein, 2009): in varying degrees, people care about the well-being of others and are glad when they can reduce their suffering and increase their happiness. Another major motivation is enlightened self-interest. Many economists and political theorists today emphasize the "price of inequality" - how well-being within and across societies is linked, so that inequality harms everyone (e.g., Atkinson, 2015; Stiglitz, 2012). This is true at a societal level, but also at a personal level. It is difficult to be happy if those we have a relationship with are unhappy; and as just mentioned, helping others can be very satisfying in itself. Moreover, helping others can lead them to help us in return. Psychologist Hans Selye (1956, 1978) argues that, in addition to "loving our neighbor," often seen primarily as a duty, we should work to "win our neighbor's love," knowing that if we help others they will typically show greater affection and support toward us.

In developing and participating in relationships, it is important to be aware that people vary enormously; so if our relationships are to turn out well, we have to accept those we are involved with largely as they are. The basis of satisfactory relationships is not so much that we have the same goals, ideas, and styles, as that we can enjoy each other and enhance each other's lives. This does not mean we should go along with just anything in a relationship. However, as we draw the line on some matters and negotiate compromises on others, we have to largely ignore some differences because they do not harm us or anyone else and so are not worth mentioning or dwelling on. Of course, we are not talking here about forms of bullying and abuse in relationships, which need to be addressed explicitly to the extent possible.

In teaching. The classroom should be a genuinely social place in which people enjoy and celebrate each other and care for each other. The emphasis on relationships so important in life in general should be apparent in the classroom. This is in line with the thought of Peterson (1992), who observes that the classroom is the site of a great many activities that take place in a space not much larger than a living room. To prohibit conversation and social interaction in that setting makes no sense, and renders the classroom - in which children spend so much time - quite foreign to ordinary life.

As in everyday life, students can find enjoyment in a social classroom because of the presence of others, and can learn a great deal from the insights their peers have gained through everyday experience. They can also learn what other people are like and how to interact with them. Teachers have to work hard at building a social community, since this is not the way many parents and even students view the schooling process. But if they go down this path, teachers themselves will find their role more enjoyable and enriching. The difference between adults and young people is often exaggerated: teachers can learn much from their students about how to relate to others and enjoy them.

7. Inclusion

In life. In the previous section we discussed the role of relationships in increasing both our own well-being and that of other people. We now wish to note that, in choosing relationships and engaging in them, it is important to be inclusive of people who differ from us in gender, sexual preference, race, ethnicity, abilities, socioeconomic status, etc. Once again, this is in our own interests as well as that of other people, and also makes a lot of sense: it should not be something we do just out of a sense of duty or political correctness.

People have a great many commonalities across the categories of gender, race, ethnicity, SES, etc., and the differences *within* such categories are typically far greater than *between* them. Most important differences between people simply do not run along lines of race, ethnicity, etc. Important differences (e.g., in intellectual interests, social behavior, political views, etc.) occur at an *individual* level, *within* gender, race, etc. Hence, stereotyping people according to such categories leads to enormous misconceptions and does a great deal of harm. Besides, in our rapidly globalizing world an increasing number of people do not belong to a single race, ethnicity, etc.

Unfortunately, much of the work by academics, educators, and others to encourage "respect" for people of various categories, though well-intentioned, has been largely ineffective (Dolby, 2012; Lowenstein, 2009). The common argument that, yes, people of different categories are very different but we should respect them and treat them equally, tends mainly to reinforce the belief that such people *are* very different, which is precisely the cause of most of the prejudice in the world. Accepting such stereotypes usually results in our treating people in harmful ways, no matter how hard we try to do otherwise. And it also does harm to ourselves, by closing off opportunities for relationships that could often be more enjoyable and enriching than those with people of our own category (whatever that means).

In teaching. Classrooms need to be more inclusive than they typically are at present, for all the reasons we have just noted about life in general. Teachers and students alike can learn from classroom experience and explicit discussions the extent to which the differences between categories of people have been exaggerated, and they can learn to enjoy relationships with people "different" from themselves. Some people suggest that if the classroom is more friendly and inclusive than the "real world," students will develop unrealistic ideas and not be able to function in everyday life. But being exposed to such a different way of thinking and interacting can in fact leave students better informed, more optimistic, and *more* able to live in the real world.

One problem in the classroom is that, with so much attention given to learning subject content, there is not enough time left to discuss issues of inclusion, prejudice, and discrimination. This problem can be overcome largely by initiating discussion of inclusion within the study of subjects, e.g., literature, history, and social studies. Even in mathematics, examples of data analysis can be included that show how certain categories of people are discriminated against. Another crucial strategy is to ensure that *all* students in the class are heard from in presentations and discussions, so everyone can see for themselves the range of talents and personality traits found in people of all categories. Beyond subject teaching, the classroom can be run in such a way that students get to know each other and relating to people inclusively is modeled.

8. Self-Interest and Self-Esteem

In life. We have talked before about the importance of individuals looking after their own needs to a considerable extent - notably their happiness, satisfaction, etc. - since this has been so undervalued in the past. The individual has been neglected in traditional morality, religion, and politics, and this has done great harm both by increasing the inequality between rich and poor and discouraging individuals from developing their own way of life. Certainly we should help others a great deal, as discussed in the previous section; but if we do not look after our own interests, things are likely to go badly. It is very difficult for others (even if they are willing) to figure out what we need and how best to pursue it. Furthermore, looking after ourselves can benefit others, as we usually have to be strong and in good spirits to be of much help to others.

Concern for oneself should definitely be balanced by concern for others, but achieving the balance has to be approached in a new way. The outlook widely promoted in the past has been that we should put others first (otherwise we are "selfish") and leave our own well-being partly to the generosity of others and partly to natural processes: "just let it happen." But there are three problems here, all of them discussed before. (a) Self-interest is a basic human inclination, and trying to ignore or suppress it leads to confusion and even psychic damage. (b) The generosity of others is not something we can rely on sufficiently, partly because they do not know us well enough to look after us in a comprehensive way. And (c) personal well-being is such a vast and complex area that it requires constant planning and decision making: it will not "just happen" to the degree necessary. Accordingly, we have no reasonable alternative but to pay a lot of attention to our own well-being.

Closely related to pursuit of self-interest and our own happiness is self-esteem. (a) Lack of self-esteem undermines our happiness by increasing negative feelings and decreasing positive ones. (b) Self-esteem is important so we see ourselves as worthy of having our needs met and deliberately set about working toward that end. And (c) self-esteem is important for standing up to other people, including bullies and predators of various kinds. Often people are left with poor self-esteem by aspects of their child-rearing and schooling, societal inequality and bias, and the global celebrity culture. It is essential to find ways to boost self-esteem, in part by acknowledging the legitimacy of self-interest.

There is another way in which emphasizing happiness helps build self-esteem. As happiness becomes a central value of life, many other measures commonly used to judge a person's worth seem less significant. If a person is a mediocre scholar, not a strong athlete, not wealthy, not particularly good looking, and not a celebrity, but nevertheless but has a complex of qualities that lead to happiness, they have reason to feel good about themselves and be admired by others. This does not mean we should not admire scholars and athletes, or even people with wealth and celebrity (depending on how they got it); but we need a much better sense of what is important and admirable in life than is common at present. The question "But are they happy?" should be asked often about people who at present are unquestioningly admired and celebrated.

In teaching. Teachers need to model an appropriate level of self-interest and self-esteem by maintaining work-life balance, with interests and enjoyments within and beyond the profession (Beck & Kosnik, 2014). If they see themselves in a purely self-sacrificing role, as "super-teachers" and "healers of society's woes" (Kosnik, 1999), they will not set a good example of how to live to their students and will likely burn out quickly; they may also be too hard on their students, because of unconscious resentment of their situation. They should encourage their students, also, to pursue happiness and develop their own way of life. This in turn will help their students develop a better self-image, as they and their peers become aware of their many talents.

9. Optimism/Realism

In life. Earlier in this paper we talked about the need to balance optimism and realism in life, noting Oettingen's (2014) strategy of "mental contrasting" whereby we think about both the positives and negatives of life situations. People are often advised to "think positively" or "look on the bright side," but while there is an important insight here it needs to be incorporated into a more nuanced position. The danger of being overly optimistic is captured by another saying, "perfection is the enemy of the good": if we set our sights on perfection we will usually be disappointed and end up *less* happy than if we had lower expectations in the first place. Obviously, a balanced approach involves recognizing that there will always be some negatives in life, so a very high level of happiness across a whole life-time is probably impossible. This is a sobering thought, but acknowledging and accepting it increases happiness and well-

being in the long-run.

Of course, it is also possible to be too pessimistic, overlooking the positive aspects of life available to us. This is where sayings such as "look on the bright side" or "savor the everyday" can be useful. However, this should still take the form of mental contrasting: we are aware of the negatives and are working to achieve a balance by thinking *also* of the positives. There are many everyday contexts where we need this kind of mental balancing: getting up in the morning, having a tooth filled, doing a hard workout. In such situations, it is appropriate to try to think about positive things, or just something else (e.g., our breathing), or even nothing at all - if we can. But this is to relieve the unpleasantness we are clearly aware of: these are not cases of denying reality and being overly optimistic.

Thinking realistically about life covers a broader range of cognitions than the term mental contrasting on its own might suggest (as Oettingen elaborates in her book). It is not just a matter of reflecting on positives and negatives in the moment. It involves having a comprehensive worldview that we keep referring to and refining as we approach everyday situations. It requires developing extensive knowledge and ideas about the nature of reality, the present and the future, the big picture. This is why education in the fullest sense, both formal and informal, is so important for living well.

But is a balance of optimism and realism sufficient for us? Is it enough to keep us going? Apparently for most people it is. Most people do keep going (the survival of the human race attests to that); and some studies even suggest that people on average become happier in late middle-age, even though they are more aware of the limitations of life, and many of their earlier hopes have been moderated. A standard way to encourage people to adopt a particular path or therapy is to exaggerate (perhaps not deliberately) how bad life is and then promise supreme well-being if one embraces x or y. What we propose instead - along with Oettingen (mental contrasting), Seligman (everyone has a limited range of happiness), and many others - is the stance that if we adopt a more realistic outlook, have the basic necessities of life, and work at building a happy life, we have a very good chance of being "quite happy."

In teaching. In teaching, specifically, it is also important to balance optimism and realism. We talked earlier about the need to make teaching feasible, to resist extreme "reform" initiatives (Kennedy, 2010), and to avoid seeing the "super-teacher" as the norm (Kosnik, 1999). In teaching as in life generally, overly optimistic goals tend to do more harm than good. Obviously teaching like any profession can be improved - that is the central concern of this book - but talk of "best practice" (as distinct from "good practice") and the "transformation" of schooling is often politically motivated and in fact undermines teacher morale and steady growth in effectiveness.

Turning to students, they too should to be introduced to meaningful, achievable goals, not just extreme, narrow academic learning that is only possible for a few and usually of limited value in the real world. Students should be supported in doing well academically - even exceling in some cases - but that should be just part of what they pursue. They need to be helped to develop objectives for life and work that are optimistic yet realistic in terms of their interests and abilities. Much of the anxiety young people are experiencing today is due to the fact that, on the one hand, they are afraid they will not do very well academically, and on the other, they cannot see how their school learning (even if they are very successful at it) will help them succeed in the constantly changing world of work. They need a more optimistic yet realistic basis for overcoming these anxieties.

10. Knowledge, Life-long Learning, and "Critical Thinking"

In life. Students need to "do both": acquire extensive subject knowledge *and* knowledge of the "real world" and how to live; and said such extensive learning should be *life-long*, for teachers and students alike. All this knowledge is necessary because of the complexity of life. As noted, overly simplistic suggestions for living are often proposed: just "think positively" or "meditate" or "live in the present" and you will be fine. But living well requires constantly drawing on many ideas, values, and pieces of information (though not all at the same time).

However, the knowledge we get from books, schooling, the internet, and other sources is not sufficient by itself. Crucial though such external input is, it has to be assessed, modified, and supplemented in light of our own everyday experiences and emerging world view. This is partly because our daily experiences offer so many opportunities to learn about the world, and partly because our knowledge has to be tailored to our own constantly developing way of life.

Much of this personal knowledge building might be called "critical thinking," and this term is widespread today. However, the term "critical" should be used sparingly as it is normally too technical for everyday speech - most people

stop using it once the course, lecture, or workshop is over. It also has negative connotations for most people. Referring to someone as "critical" is typically not a complement, except in academia. What we are talking about here is usually better called being reflective or thoughtful - or simply thinking. It involves weighing our own and other people's ideas and practices and judging whether they should be modified or set aside.

In teaching. Fostering knowledge acquisition, obviously, is a major dimension of teaching, as is laying a foundation for on-going learning in later life. However, as discussed in earlier sections, the "knowledge" students acquire in school is often quickly forgotten because it is not understood deeply or seen as relevant. Moreover, because students experience learning as something done to them rather than something they do, they fail to develop outlooks, interests, skills, and "habits of mind" that ensure ongoing learning. They need to be introduced to more relevant forms of knowledge, and be given more autonomy in pursuing it, if this central purpose of schooling is to be achieved in the short and long run. With respect to "critical thinking" in particular, it has to be represented as a normal aspect of sound everyday reflection on relevant matters if it is to become part of students' lives during their schooling and afterwards.

11. "Mindfulness," Meditation, and Reflection

In life. In addition to knowing a great deal about life and the world, we need to be constantly attending to what we are doing and what is going on within and around us so we can apply our insights and continue to add to them. This kind of comprehensive attention is often referred to as being "mindful," and the practice of "mindfulness" is advocated in various settings today, including medicine, business, and education. However, in line with our earlier comments about the complexity of life and the need for a wide range of ideas, we believe mindfulness has to be defined more broadly than it often is. In this vein, Kabat-Zinn (2013) says mindfulness involves "purposefully paying attention to things we ordinarily never give a moment's thought to" (p. xlix). And Miller (2017) observes:

> There are two basic approaches to mindfulness practice. One is a form of meditation where we are present as much as possible to what is happening in the moment with regards to thoughts, feelings, sounds, and body sensations…. Another form is applying attention to our everyday life and involves bringing awareness to our daily lives. (p. 325)

As these quotations suggest, we need to be mindful of a wide range of things and our "meditation" or "attention to life" has to take place in a variety of settings.

To accommodate this broader approach, we can either extend our definition of mindfulness to include many different forms of meditation, e.g., sitting meditation, walking meditation, reading meditation, etc., or use a different term to cover the many kinds of attention. Burnett and Evans (2016) take the latter approach. They use the term "personal practices" and include meditation (in a narrow sense) as one element within it. They maintain that in order to make "discerning decisions" you have to apply "more than one way of knowing [and] integrate all your decision-making faculties" (p.166-167). They go on:

> Doing this requires that you educate and mature your access to and awareness of your emotional/intuitive/-spiritual ways of knowing (or however you may name these affective aspects of our shared humanity). For centuries, the most commonly affirmed path to such maturity has been that of personal practices such as journaling, prayer or spiritual exercises, meditation, integrated physical practices like yoga or Tai Chi, and so on. (p. 168)

Later in their book they share some of their own personal practices. Burnett, for example, does a morning meditation while shaving (shaving meditation!), but also engages in other kinds of daily or weekly affirmations, self-reminders, re-choosings, and artistic and culinary activities. The authors emphasize that while these are the sorts of things they do, readers should build their own set of practices depending on what "helps you live your own self-designed life" (p. 227). Clearly, then, they support having a range of ways to attend to reality and life.

Apart from "mindfulness," "meditation," and "personal practices," the term "reflection" is often used to refer to many of the kinds of attention to reality and ourselves being discussed here. Reflection does not normally have the spiritual connotations often associated with the other terms (although it could), but it suggests a similar kind of deep and relevant "thinking things over" in order to make sound life decisions. Schon (1983) stresses the importance of "re-

flection-in-action" in guiding behavior and increasing insight, arguing that such an approach to decision making is generally more effective than the "technical rationality" approach, which minimizes everyday experience and proceeds just by "the application of scientific theory and technique to the instrumental problems of practice" (p. 30). Some may prefer simply to use the term reflection when talking about the types of attention required to live well. But in the end the term used is not important, so long as what is meant is clear and the required knowing, thinking, and attending are in place, in a form suited to each individual.

This last point - the need to find a mode of reflection suited to the individual - is crucial. Dolan (2014) says mindfulness "definitely has a place" but is too "effortful" for many people to actually engage in over time. He usually favors what he calls "light-touch" forms of mindfulness that rely on "nudging" (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008) and are "context-focused," that is, involve creating a life environment such that you are able to "go with the grain of your human behavior" (p. 153). This may appear an easy way out, but in Dolan's view it is generally not only "easier" but also "more effective" (p. 153). This fits with our earlier discussion of the need for a comprehensive way of life that not only takes account of the complexity of life but also provides the "multiple motivation" we normally require to implement our way of life.

In teaching. As in life generally, teachers and students need to develop ways to attend to what is going on within and around them, bring their wider knowledge to bear on decisions, and learn from everyday experience. Teachers should model and foster in their students practices of paying attention, weighing alternatives, slowing down, positive thinking, mental contrasting, reflecting on outcomes, and so forth. Many of these practices come under the "habits of mind" that Meier et al. (2015) say should be learned in school, in addition to subject knowledge. They can also be learned through the constructivist, dialogical, inquiry learning approaches to teaching discussed in previous chapters. Conducting mindfulness practices in class can help in this area, but it is important to interpret mindfulness very broadly, add many other kinds of attention and reflection, and help students develop their own distinctive ways of "thinking things through" in everyday life.

12. Physical and Mental Health

In life. The final example we will give of an important dimension of living well that connects to teaching is health, both physical and mental. Obviously health is a vast topic and we can only touch on a few aspects here. A key point is the extent to which our physical health is dependent on our way of life: e.g., diet, sleep, exercise, physical activity generally. This ties in with the importance of developing a holistic way of life (Miller, 1988, 2010), one that takes account of physical, emotional, intellectual, cultural, and other needs. Reasons for giving greater emphasis than in the past to the physical include: the impact of physical health and fitness on our happiness; the need to build resistance to illnesses of various kinds; and the importance of health and fitness for success in other life pursuits.

Another crucial issue in physical health is the limits of expert knowledge: the extent to which medical professionals differ in their diagnoses and treatments, and hence the need (where feasible) to get second and even third opinions, engage in dialogue with our health professionals, talk to relatives and friends about health matters, and give weight to our own experiences and ideas in the area. This is in line with Schon's position, noted earlier, on the limitations of science-based "technical rationality," and our own general view (Beck & Kosnik, 2014) of the importance of practitioner inquiry, as argued by Dewey, Cochran-Smith, Lytle, Loughran, Zeichner, and many others. We should see ourselves as "practitioner inquirers" in the matter of our own health, given how much experience we have gained over our lifetime in regard to our health and related matters. This is not to question the great importance of medical science, which continues to advance in very impressive ways; but this very success can lead us to forget the complexity and individuality of health and how much we know about it from our own experience.

Turning to mental health, a key principle is that there is a continuum rather than a sharp divide between "clinical" and everyday mental problems, both in their diagnosis and prevention/treatment. For example, perhaps the most common mental health problems today are anxiety, stress, depression, and poor self-esteem (the teachers in our longitudinal study mention these as the challenges their students most frequently encounter). Mindfulness practice, widely advocated as an approach to mental health, focuses primarily on mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) with links to anxiety, stress, and depression (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Similarly, in studying mental health among LGBTQ youth, Poteat, Rivers, and Scheer (2016) have identified "anxiety, depression, [and] traumatic stress" as central concerns (p. 105). But

while these conditions in an extreme form require clinical attention, medication, and sometimes periods of hospitalization, in milder forms they are something that everyone experiences and can work to ameliorate in themselves and others (e.g., their children, students, employees). Much of what we have said in earlier sections about developing a good way of life speaks to ways of reducing anxiety, stress, depression, and hopelessness among ordinary people in everyday life. These are things that tend to undermine happiness, enjoyment, well-being, etc., which we have identified as central goals of life.

But the connection between happiness and mental health runs in both directions: just as improved mental health can help increase happiness, so happiness can help promote mental health. Maximizing pleasure and satisfaction is a key way to reduce anxiety, stress, depression, and sadness and their unfortunate behavioral accompaniments: we are unlikely to be anxious and depressed when we are frequently enjoying ourselves and having satisfying experiences and relationships. Anxiety, stress, and depression often arise from a sense that an enjoyable, satisfying life - in general or in particular areas - may pass us by or already has. The fostering of happiness in ourselves and others, then, is a crucial dimension of promoting mental health.

In teaching. In the area of health, the school can play a very important role through a modified approach to health and physical education (HPE). At present physical education tends to be given priority, and within physical education sporting skills tend to be emphasized rather than health and fitness in general. This limits the value of the program for many students and can undermine the self-respect of students who are less athletic. It also places the emphasis on present physical activities rather than life-long activities and routines that can be continued after school is over and enhance one's whole way of life.

In matters of physical and mental health, where does the general teacher role end and the clinical role take over? Obviously there is an important distinction here; but ordinary teachers can often help prevent the slide into a clinical situation (Holt & Grills, 2016; Phillippo, 2013). And even after a clinical diagnosis and the beginning of treatment, ordinary teachers may be able to contribute to the success of the treatment. In this context, Kabat-Zinn's (2013) statement at the beginning of his book on mindfulness is worth noting:

> The recommendations made in this book are generic and are not meant to replace formal medical or psychiatric treatment. Individuals with medical problems should consult their physicians about the appropriateness of following the MBSR [Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction] program…and discuss appropriate modifications relevant to their unique circumstances and conditions. (p. xvii)

As we can see, Kabat-Zinn envisages his program continuing to play a valuable role (perhaps in a modified form) even after a "medical or psychiatric" problem has been diagnosed and treatment has begun; and the same can be true of ordinary teachers as they continue to work to foster physical and mental health in all their students through way of life education.

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